

MORE ON SOVEREIGNTY

The other week I spoke about the need to become *spiritual* warriors. I also described some of the things we need to do in order for God to make us the kind of warriors He wants us to be. I mentioned the need to have God *first* in our lives. I mentioned the need to *separate* from people, including other brethren and family members, who try (knowingly or unknowingly) to hinder us spiritually. I mentioned the need to *recognize* the work of evil spirits, and the need to learn how to overcome them. In addition, there are many religious ideas and erroneous theological errors taught in the Church System, which keep God's people from ever becoming spiritual warriors. So I mentioned the need to get our *doctrines* straight, and how we must especially reject the errors of John Calvin.

Then last week, I exposed the main error of Calvin, which was his twisted view of the sovereignty of God. This *one* error has caused more false doctrine to flourish in the Churches, and has caused more spiritual destruction among the people of God than you can possibly imagine. This is why I'm so hard on Calvin, and on Calvinists. Satan has used their perverted view of sovereignty to do several things:

(1) Satan has used it to impute sin and wickedness to a holy and righteous God. As I said last week, if what Calvin taught was true, if God wrote a "*divine script*" for every person who would ever be born (both the righteous and the wicked), and if He sovereignly ordained that each person follow that script just the way He wrote it, then our God is responsible for every evil deed every person has ever done since the fall of Adam. Indeed, He is responsible for the fall of Adam too.

(2) Satan has also used this perverted view of sovereignty to completely destroy the understanding of *why* God created man to begin with. The whole plan and purpose of God, regarding mankind, revolves around our *free will*. Everything God desires from man, everything God desires to give man, it all has to come through our free-will choices—all of it! The success or failure of God's plan does *not* rest on His sovereignty—it rests on *our ability* to choose. This whole thing is about your free will, people! That's right! It's not about God's sovereignty at all.

Well, isn't God sovereign then? You bet He is. God can do anything He wants to do. He could very easily create a whole race of people that will automatically obey Him in every single detail, forever. He could have made us that way too, if He so desired. But the fact is, that's *not* what He desires. What God desires is a people who have not only *freely* chosen Him (something which requires a free will), but a people who have fought and labored against their own self will, against their own fallen flesh nature, and against all the Satanic pressure that bombards them 24/7, in order *to* freely choose Him. That's what He's after.

God wants a people who have the choice to say "*No*", but who will willingly say "*Yes*". So the fundamental issue in the whole program of redemption is not the power of God or the sovereignty of God, but the *authority of man* to choose between Satan/self, and God. Man must be sovereign over his own choices or the whole program will collapse—and here is where the problem begins.

We have a severe handicap. Since the fall, every person who is born into this world is born a prisoner of Satan. Though we can choose many things in life, everything we choose remains in the realm of the fallen Adamic nature or demonic powers. We are "free" in a sense to choose things, but in truth we really aren't free because all the choices remain under the power of the flesh or demon spirits. Even the "moral" choices

we make are *contaminated* with sin. We are stuck in a box. Only when a person is regenerated and given a totally different kind of nature—which Paul refers to as, “*the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*” (Eph. 4:24)—are we truly free to choose because only then do we have a real choice. Even after we have been regenerated, we still have a handicap because there are many areas of the soul (ie: minds, desires, emotions) which remain in bondage to Satan.

The answer to this mess we are in is not to have God come and do everything *for* us, like Calvin taught. All that would do is change us from being a robot of Satan to robot of God. The answer is for God to come and *set our wills free* so we can have a real choice. God uses His power to see to it that at every stage of our walk—whether it’s the very beginning when we first hear and accept the gospel, or whether it’s as we grow in our walk with Him every day—we have the power to choose. God is there to *offset* the handicap we have as a result of being at the mercy of an enemy that is more powerful than we are. He’s there to level the playing field so we have a real choice.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Galatians 5:13

*But take heed lest by any means **this liberty of yours** become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.*

I. Corinthians 8:9

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

I. Peter 2:16

The only people who have a choice between using their liberty for an occasion to the flesh or using it as an opportunity to love and serve, are those who’s wills have truly been set free. The only people who have a choice between using their liberty as a cloak of evil or using it to serve, are those who’s wills have truly been set free. The whole purpose of God setting our will’s free is so we have the ability to choose! When we are given the choice, then, and *only* then can the question of what we will do with our liberty be answered. Once we are free, will we freely chose Jesus Christ and His righteousness; or will we freely choose to serve our own selves, and by extension, Satan. Unless the will of a person is set free from the power of Adam and the power of Satan, it cannot choose God.

Therefore, God’s part in all this is to free the person’s will enough that he/she really has the ability to choose. If, in that state of freedom and liberty we choose God, then His power is released in us and it enables us to experience what we have freely chosen. You can think of it like an Oreo cookie. The initial release of the will, so it can freely choose, comes from God. Also, the *result* of that choice has to come from God. That’s the two outside parts of the cookie. That’s the “sovereign grace” of God in action. But the actual choice is the middle of the cookie. That choice will not and cannot be made by God for us. The choice itself can *only* be made by the individual. That’s the free will of man in action.

So you see, everything depends upon *the ability* to choose. Since our enemy is more powerful than we will ever be in our own human strength, God has to level the playing field for us. He has to offset this *imbalance of power* with His own power. He has to bring the scales that are tipped in Satan's favor, back to center. Once that balance of power has been equalized, we and we alone are the ones who must make the choice. Satan *can't* force us and God *won't* force us.

It has to be this way, you see, or else God would never be able to justly cast anyone into eternal torment for what **THEY** have done. Now don't misunderstand what I am saying here. It's true that Adam's guilt remains on every person who is born into this world. It's also true that on that basis *alone* God could justly send every one of us to the Lake of Fire. But you see, the question is not: What can God do theoretically? The question is: What has God declared in His Word that He will do? And if there's one message that's consistent throughout the entire Bible, it's that every person (not just the unsaved) will be judged according to **THEIR OWN** works.

*He repays a man for **what he has done**; he brings upon him **what his conduct deserves**.*

Job 34:11 NIV

*Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man **according to his work**.*

Psalms 62:12

*If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he **render to every man according to his works**?*

Proverbs 24:12

*Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall **eat the fruit of their doings**.*

Isaiah 3:10

*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to **give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings**.*

Jeremiah 17:10

*Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to **give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings**:*

Jeremiah 32:19

*Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: **For there is no respect of persons with God.***

Romans 2:6-11

*For we [Christians] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, **according to that he hath done**, whether it be good or bad.*

II. Corinthians 5:10

*Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, **the same shall he receive of the Lord**, whether he be bond or free.*

Ephesians 6:8

*And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons **judgeth according to every man's work**, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:*

I. Peter 1:17

*And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and will **give unto every one of you according to your works.***

Revelation 2:23

*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, **to give every man according as his work shall be.***

Revelation 22:12

In order for you and I to be justly judged for OUR OWN works, we have to be free to choose what kind of works we will do. Listen my friends; God is *not* going to reward you for what HE has done. In the same way, He's not going to punish you for what SATAN has done. You and I are going to be rewarded or punished for what we ourselves have done. If we have no choice, then we can't be judged according to our own works—it's that simple. So God *intervenes* in our lives, and on our behalf, whenever it's necessary, in order to give us the ability to make a free-will choice. God will never let Satan force us to serve him. But at the same time, God will never force us to serve Him either.

Calvinists would certainly call this heresy and would accuse me of exalting man's sovereignty above the sovereignty of God. No doubt many ministers would accuse me of preaching a "man-centered gospel". But I'm not. This is the only way God will ever get what He is after, and it's the only way He will ever be able to judge every man according to his own works in true righteousness.

Let me say it again: *everything* about God's eternal plan, regarding the salvation of mankind, revolves around our ability to choose. It's all about the will. God could have made eternal robots but that's not what He wants. He wants a people who have freely chosen to love Him, who have freely chosen to serve Him, and who have freely chosen to be married to Messiah's for all eternity.

When you get this revelation in your spirits, the wickedness of Calvin's error will finally begin to dawn on you. You will see that this one philosophical idea—that man really has no free will because God is sovereign—has kept (and will keep) millions and millions of believers from experiencing the wonderful things God has prepared for them.

(3) Satan has also used Calvin's perverted view of sovereignty to obscure and hide the reality of *his work* in this world. You see, if God is in absolute control of everything that happens, then the part Satan plays in things is greatly *minimized*. Whenever Satan does something, the Calvinist will automatically lay the blame for what has happened at God's feet. They will say: "*Well, since God is in control, this must all be part of His plan*". That is so wrong! Do you have any idea how many ignorant Christians go around blaming God for the things Satan is doing? They do it all the time—and they use the Bible to support this insanity. Have you ever heard a preacher quote any of the following verses?

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

Psalms 37:23-24

A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

Proverbs 16:9

O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Jeremiah 10:23

Of course it is true that the Lord orders the steps of the righteous. But if you have a perverted view of His sovereignty, you will never know *the difference* between when God is using circumstances and situations to order your steps, and when Satan is using (or creating) circumstances to stop you from doing God's will, or bring you into some kind of spiritual bondage. It will all just be one great mass of confusion. Pray tell, how much glory does God get when we who say we are being led by the Holy Spirit, allow ourselves to be led by the circumstances *Satan* creates? How much glory does God get when people say He is responsible for the things *Satan* does?

*But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we **made every effort to see you**. For we wanted to come to you--certainly I, Paul, did, again and again-- **but Satan stopped us**.*

I. Thessalonians 2:17-18 NIV

*Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes **I purposed to come unto you**, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.*

Romans 1:13

Please notice that Paul speaks of two different occasions when he wanted to visit the brethren in specific locations. In *both* instances he was prevented from doing so. But he was spiritually mature enough to know the difference between the *types* of hindrances he was experiencing and *who* was behind them. In the case of his visit to Thessalonica, he knew *Satan* was the one who was hindering him because he knew it was Satan who had caused the unbelieving Jews of that region to have him thrown out of that town to begin with. He knew the same power which caused him to be thrown out of that town was being utilized to *keep him out*. Satan thought that if he could keep Paul out of Thessalonica, he could use persecution to eventually destroy the church that had been raised up there.

In the case of his visit to Rome, even though he doesn't explicitly say so, the impression he gives is that it was *God* who was preventing him from going, for he said *the reason* he had been unable to go was so he might have more fruit among the Gentiles. This was not a case where Satan was hindering him from going somewhere and doing God's will. Rather, it was a case where God Himself was using circumstances to order Paul's steps. God was preventing Paul from going to Rome because it wasn't time for him to go. He had *more work* for Paul to do among the Gentiles, and He knew that once Paul got to Rome, his ministry would start drawing to a close. Paul would spend two years in Rome and then be martyred.

There is a big difference between God arranging or using circumstances—whether they be beneficial or adverse—to order our steps, and Satan doing the same thing in order to stop us from doing God's will or get us off in another direction. Those who go through life with a perverted view of God's sovereignty tend to think that everything that happens to them is somehow God's will *because* He is in complete control of everything that happens. When they come up against a hindrance that Satan is creating, many times they will just assume it's God ordering their steps.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, **there was given to me a thorn in the flesh**, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing **I besought the Lord thrice**, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory **in my infirmities**, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

II. Corinthians 12:7-9

Notice how Paul dealt with this particular attack. He didn't just assume God was ordering his steps through this thorn in the flesh. First of all, he knew it was coming from Satan, and he wasn't going to accept anything he knew was coming from the power of the enemy. So he prayed for deliverance. He didn't just pray once. He prayed again and again *until* he got an answer from the Lord concerning it.

Once God told Paul He was allowing this attack in order to keep him humble, *then* Paul yielded to that situation as coming from the hand of the Lord. But accepting an attack of the enemy, as coming from the Lord, was *not* his first response because Paul was a spiritual warrior. He loved God and he *hated* Satan, and he had power in the Spirit to *defeat* Satan wherever he went. He would never accept anything he knew was coming from Satan, unless God gave him a specific word to do so.

*And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, **Sergius Paulus**, a prudent man; **who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.** But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, **thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness**, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, **and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.** And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.*

Acts 13:6-11

Let's look at how Paul deals with another Satanic hindrance. In this case, he knew God had opened the door for him to preach the gospel to this Roman official, and he knew the time to do it was right then. So there was no question in his mind as to the source or the purpose of the hindrance. He knew this was not a situation where God was using adverse circumstances to order his steps. He knew that it was Satan who was trying to stop him from doing God's will.

Satan saw that an official of the Roman Empire, which was under his control, was in danger of receiving the gospel. So he *supernaturally* intervened in the situation through one of his other servants—Elymas the sorcerer—in order to stop Paul. Though God was allowing this battle to take place, He did not plan it, nor did He ordain it, nor was it His will from eternity past, as laid out in some “script”. It was an attack from the enemy, and the decision to either resist that attack or capitulate was *completely* up to Paul.

Of course, we all realize that the power to *win* that battle had to come from God. Paul would never have been able to overcome a supernatural attack in his own strength. Even the wisdom to know *what* to choose had to come from God—this was God sovereignly intervening in the situation on Paul's behalf to level the playing field. A supernatural attack from the enemy was met by the supernatural wisdom of God. But the *actual choice* to either fight or yield was Paul's, and Paul's alone. If he would have chosen to cut and run, God would have held *him* accountable for all the consequences that wrong choice produced.

Now what do you suppose Paul might have done, had he believed Calvin's perverted view of God's sovereignty? He might very well have stopped preaching because he would be thinking that since God is in control of everything that happens, and since this interference had arisen, maybe God didn't want him preaching to that Roman official after all. In other words, he might have done what so many of today's Christians do all the time—attribute Satan's work to God.

So far we have only been talking about *individuals*. What about *nations*? How does this all work when it comes to nations? Is it the same? Or does God play by a different set of rules when it comes to nations? Do nations have free wills? Or are the leaders of nations pre-planned by God? How about America's new messiah? Was the election of King Obama God's choice? Was it God's will? Was it His desire? Was it His plan? Exactly who is responsible for setting up King Obama, anyway?

Well, for the Calvinist the answer is simple: God is sovereign—meaning, *He* rules the kingdoms of men. *He* sets up kings and *He* removes kings. *He* gives the kingdoms of men to whomsoever *He* chooses and *He* sets the basest of men over them. And of course the Calvinist has Scripture to back up his assertions:

*And he changeth the times and the seasons: **he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:***

Daniel 2:21

*This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that **the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men....**And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that **the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.***

Daniel 4:17 & 32

Pretty clear is it not? Who could argue with such clear statements? Well, I won't argue with what Daniel actually said because it's true. However, I will argue with the "spin" that's put on what he said by people who couldn't rightly divide the Word of Truth if you paid them. For you see, Daniel didn't say God sets up EVERY leader of EVERY nation. He simply said that God can, and does, set up kings and remove kings. Have you ever read the eighth chapter of Hosea.

*Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him. **They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.***

Hosea 8:3-4

Here it is explicitly stated that the people of Israel “set up” kings for themselves. God was not involved in the process at all, except that He *allowed them* to exercise their free wills to choose their own king. God didn’t set up these kings. Neither was it a situation where God sovereignly gave the Hebrews the rotten kings they deserved, for when speaking of the selection of these kings, God clearly says: “*I knew it not*”.

When He says, “I knew it not”, He’s not saying He had no idea what was going on in the nation of Israel. Israel was God’s covenant people. You can be sure He was watching everything they did, all the time. Besides, God knows everything that happens long before it happens anyway. That phrase is a *Hebraism* which means “*I had nothing to do with it*”. The people of Israel did what they pleased with regards to choosing their kings. They didn’t consult God and God had nothing to do with it.

Do you see what this verse is saying yet? God didn’t give Israel those kings because it was *His* will, nor did He give Israel those kings because it was *their* will. He didn’t “*give*” Israel those kings at all ...period. He had nothing to do with the whole process!

God has given a certain amount of power and sovereignty to Satan, as well as to individuals and nations, and He has set certain boundaries within which both men and demons are free to do whatever is within their power to do—and we would be wise to stop ignoring this fact. The Bible clearly teaches that Satan is the “god of this world” (*II. Cor. 2:4*), and the “prince of this world” (*Jn. 12:31*), and “the prince of the power of the air” (*Eph 2:2*). It calls the fallen angels which do Satan’s bidding, “principalities”, “powers”, and “the rulers of the darkness of this world” (*Eph. 6:12*).

But isn’t God still sovereign over Satan? You bet He is! At any time, God *can* override and overrule any of Satan’s plans. At any time, He *can* intervene and wreck the plans Satan has for an individual or an entire nation. But just because God can do this, that doesn’t mean he *will* do it. Many times, Satan carries out the plans he has hatched regarding an individual or a nation and God does nothing to stop him.

I say again, God has given Satan a certain amount of power and a certain amount of room (ie: authority and sovereignty) to do his evil work in this fallen world. So His sovereignty over Satan, and His sovereignty over you and me as well, isn’t going to do us any good if we don’t learn how to recognize and defeat the spirits that are out to destroy us.

Look around you, people. The fact that God is sovereign isn’t stopping *multitudes* of those who were once Christians, who were once baptized in the Holy Spirit, from being deceived and spiritually destroyed. And when I say they are being spiritually destroyed, I mean they are being *eternally* destroyed. They are being cut out of the Vine, which is Christ Jesus. Now why hasn’t the sovereignty of God protected these poor Christians? The answer is because this isn’t about God’s sovereignty; it’s all about *the choices* you and I make every day. Make the wrong choices long enough and you’re toast (spiritually). The fact that God is sovereign doesn’t change that reality one little bit!

The apostle John said: “...*the whole world is under the control of the evil one*” (*I. Jn 5:19 NIV*). What? The whole world is under the control of the evil one? What are you saying John? Don’t you know that such a statement exalts the power of Satan above the power of God? Don’t you know you are directly contradicting the view of God’s sovereignty that’s held by the vast majority of today’s Christians? What you should have written was: “...*the whole world is under the control of God*”.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Matthew 4:8-9

When Satan tempted Jesus with all the kingdoms of *this world*, please notice what Jesus didn't reply. He didn't tell Satan that all those kingdoms weren't really his to offer because God is sovereign over all His creation! The reason He didn't challenge Satan's claim of owning the kingdoms of this world is because it's true. They do belong to him—for the time being.

This fact is brought out again and again in the Scripture, but is anybody listening? For instance, in the book of Daniel we are shown how things really operate in the spirit realm. We see that the *human* king of Persia was not doing what he did through his own wisdom and might. He was being empowered and sustained by a demonic prince called "*the prince of...Persia*".

*Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But **the prince of the kingdom of Persia** withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia....Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to **fight with the prince of Persia**: and when I am gone forth, lo, the **prince of Grecia** shall come.*

Daniel 10:12-13 & 20

Here the concept of Satan being the ruler of the kingdoms of this world is clearly established. A supernatural creature called the "prince of Persia" was in charge of protecting the kingdom of Persia for Satan. He was in charge of protecting it from any interference from God. Of course, no demon, regardless of how powerful it may be, can actually stop God from intervening in the affairs of man when He chooses to do so. But the demons are all liars, just like their master, and they live in self-deception. Indeed, they are so self-deluded they *think* they can and stop God and they actually try to do so. Thus, you see the conflict between this demonic prince and the angel who was sent to give Daniel the word of the Lord. That fight was so fierce, Michael—who is also called a "prince"—had to come to the aid of the angel.

Not only did the angel have to fight the prince of Persia in order to *get to* Daniel, he said he would have to fight that same prince in order to *get back* to wherever he came from. Then he told Daniel that after he was gone, another demonic prince called "*the prince of Grecia*" would come. This prince is the one that empowered Alexander the Great.

You can see this same truth in the book of Ezekiel, when God speaks through the prophet Ezekiel to the "*king of Tyrus*" (*Ezek. 28:11-19*). In this instance, the invisible power that was sustaining the human leader of Tyrus was Satan himself. You can see it again in the book of Revelation, where John is shown the last great world empire, which is called "the beast".

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

Revelation 13:1-2

The Scripture says very clearly that it's the Dragon who raises up this last empire, and it's the Dragon who empowers the ten "kings" (or horns) that lead the beast. John says "...*the dragon gave him [the beast government & the ten kings] his power and his authority*". This reveals that, under normal circumstances, the one who controls governments and national leaders (particularly the last world empire) is Satan. Again, the reason this is the case is because, for the time being, Satan remains the "god of this world". Except for where and when God chooses to supernaturally intervene, the kingdoms of this world, and the kings who rule them, are under the control (ie: the power and sovereignty) of the prince of this world.

We need to rightly divide the Word of God, saints. Daniel's statements about God setting up kings must be kept in their proper context. He was speaking to a *particular* king named Nebuchadnezzar when he made those statements. Nebuchadnezzar was the man God sovereignly chose to carry out the words spoken by His prophets concerning the judgment of Judah. This *was* indeed a case of God sovereignly intervening in human history and raising up a ruler who didn't even belong to Him, as His instrument to bring about His will concerning His chosen people. So it's true that in this case, it was God who raised him up. But that does not mean Daniel was saying God sets up *every* national or world ruler.

I see this kind of Calvinistic foolishness all the time, especially since the recent election of "King Obama". I don't know how many bloggers and writers I've come across this week who declare with all authority that God "gave us" what we choose. We asked for a king, they say, and God "gave us" the king we asked for. **Question:** who are the two principle parties in this theological equation? **Answer:** the two principle parties in this equation are: (1) the people who asked for a king; and (2) God, who gave them the king they asked for. **Question:** where is *Satan* in this equation? **Answer:** Satan's not in the equation. Indeed, most of the time Satan doesn't even get honorable mention. Calvin's view of God's sovereignty has *hidden* the role Satan played in the whole matter.

People err when they equate America with nation of Israel. Israel was the CHURCH of the Old Testament. They were God's covenant people. God was married to that nation. When you belong to God like that, you are in a different position spiritually than those who do not belong to Him. God exercises his sovereignty over your life in a much different way, for He is *always* intervening to help you. Satan is no longer the "god" of your world. He's no longer free to do with you the way he's free to do with the unsaved. So it's wrong to equate any nation (ancient or modern) with Israel. The only comparison that's proper and Scriptural is the CHURCH of the New Testament. When it comes to the recent election, there is *no comparison* between what ignorant Americans did and the people of Israel asking for a king.

America is *not* the church. America has never belonged to God the way Old Testament Israel belonged to Him, or the way the New Testament Church belongs to Him. America may have been founded as a Christian nation, but it has never been the *equivalent* of Israel. We were founded as a Constitutional

Republic, not a Theocracy, like Israel. God has never been our King; nor has He ever directly chosen our leaders, as He did at times for Israel. The American people have been choosing their own leaders and they have been crying “*give us a king*” every four years since 1776. Also, it was the *political* leaders of this nation—not deceived church leaders, not false prophets, not the deceived church goers, but the political leaders—who *long ago* kicked God out of every arena and every institution. So the Christian foundations of this nation were destroyed long ago, long before Obama ever became a Senator, and maybe before he was even born. The fact that many Christians are just now realizing the foundations of the nation have been destroyed just goes to show you how slow most of them are to realize or accept the truth.

A perverted view of God’s sovereignty makes people think that God raised people like Marx and Lenin to power in Russia in the 1820’s. It makes them believe He raised Adolf Hitler to power in Germany in the 1930’s, and that He raised Mussolini to power in France around that same time. It makes them believe He raised Moa Tse Tung to power in Communist China in the 1949 and Fidel Castro to power in Cuba in the 1959. Well, if God raised all these leaders up, then He’s responsible for all the brutality, the rape, the mayhem and the murder, and the starvation that millions (maybe billions) of people experienced at the hands of those leaders.

So let me caution you to be careful about what you lay at the Lord’s feet. It’s very easy to do what John Calvin did within the corporate context of nations. Just as his view of sovereignty makes God responsible for all the sin of individuals, so we can easily make God responsible for all sin of *nations* and national leaders. It’s one thing to say that, as part of our judgment for booting God out of every facet of our nation’s life, God has *allowed* Satan to deceive the American people into electing Obama as President—because that’s precisely what has happened. But it’s quite another thing to say “God gave us Obama” or “God set up this king” because we asked for him and/or we deserve him. *Satan* is the one who set up this king. It was his will, his desire, his plan, and he had the authority to do it because he is still the “god of this world”. Only a supernatural intervention from God could have stopped him.

People who are always talking about the sovereignty of God, who are always saying God is doing this and God is doing that—when in fact many times *the enemy* is the one who is doing it—are under the power of a deceiving spirit. That deceiving spirit causes them to use a genuine attribute of God to hide the work and the reality of Satan in the affairs of men. It causes them to use God’s sovereignty to deny a central truth of the Scripture: which is that Satan is the RULER of this world. I tell you truly, these kinds of people will never become warriors for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before I continue, let me re-cap. **First of all**, Calvin’s view of sovereignty imputes sin and unrighteousness to God. It imputes the sin of both individuals and nations to Him. **Secondly**, it destroys the reality of how important the power of choice is to God’s plan of redemption. Calvinist say it’s all about God’s sovereignty; the Bible says it’s all about our ability to choose. **Thirdly**, it obscures and hides the reality of just how much Satan is involved in the affairs of men—both on an individual and on a corporate or national level. It obscures and/or denies that truth that Satan is indeed the *ruler* of this world.

(4) The **fourth** thing Calvin’s perverted view of sovereignty does is keep God’s people from hating Satan, and all the evil he does in this world. The Psalmist said: “*Ye that love the Lord, hate evil...*” (Ps. 97:10). The writer of Proverbs said: “*The fear of the Lord is to hate evil...*” (Prov. 8:13). Do you love God? Do you fear God? If so, then you should hate evil.

*Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. **Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee?** and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? **I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.** Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalms 139:19-24

King David loved the Lord and his love for God was very strong. It was demonstrated not only in his praise and worship of God, not only in his obedience to God, but also in his hatred for God's enemies. This wasn't a blind, self-righteous hatred because David turned right around and asked God to show him if there was any wickedness in his own heart. So he was willing to hate his own wickedness.

But wait a minute; that's the Old Covenant, right? We all know that the God of the Old Testament was hateful but the God of the New Testament is love, don't we? We all know that since brother James said: "...*mercy rejoiceth against judgment*" (*James 2:13*), we must never hate anyone or anything, right? We all know that being a good Christian means we show unconditional love and forgiveness to the unrighteous, and to all the evil they do, right? Have you read the book of Romans or Hebrews lately?

*Love must be sincere. **Hate what is evil**; cling to what is good.*

Romans 12:9 NIV

*Thou hast loved righteousness, **and hated iniquity**; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

Hebrews 1:9

Jesus *hated* iniquity. In fact, the writer of Hebrews says that the reason God anointed Him above His fellows was precisely because He hated iniquity. You want a greater anointing on your life? Let the Spirit of God work a hatred for all iniquity—including your own—into your life and see what happens. Paul told Roman *Christians* (that's the New Testament) to hate evil. Take a look at what Jesus said to the churches of Ephesus and Pergamos in the book of Revelation.

*[Ephesus] But this thou hast, that **thou hatest** the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which **I also hate**.*

Revelation 2:6

*[Pergamos] So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing **I hate**.*

Revelation 2:15

Jesus said He hated the deeds and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and He commended the believers in Ephesus for *their* hatred of those deeds. Now tell me, you who think everything that happens, happens by

the sovereign decree of God: how can you possibly hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans? I mean, after all, God probably *gave* the Nicolaitans to those believers at Ephesus because that's what they deserved. Or maybe He gave the Nicolaitans to that church because they asked for a king. What? Are you going to hate God for what He did?

Well, here's a novel thought. Maybe God has given mankind (and Satan) a certain amount of sovereignty and set up some specific boundaries within which we can all freely act out our desires, as much as we are able to do so. Maybe it was *Satan*, not God, who raised up those heretics. Maybe Satan raised them up to deceive the rest of God's people in that fellowship. And so maybe it's okay to *blame* Satan, instead of blaming God, for what was going on in that assembly. And maybe, just maybe, it's okay to *hate* Satan for what he tried to do. Do you think that's possible?

There is a *perfect* hatred of evil revealed in the Scripture, which comes as a result of *loving* God. There is a proper spiritual hatred of evil which comes from within our spirit man, which has nothing to do with fallen human hatred. It's not selfish; it's not fallen; it's not flesh; and it's not sin. This is the kind of hatred *all* Christians should have for Satan and his demons—and if our eyes were opened to see just how much havoc and destruction these spirits work in the lives of God's people, we would have no problem hating them with a perfect hatred. But you see, it's pretty hard to hate something you think is ultimately coming from the sovereign hand of God. I mean, hey; who among us is going to hate God for raising up people like Hitler, or Stalin, Moa Tse Tung. . .or Barack Hussain Obama?

My friends, we will never be spiritual warriors if we won't (or can't) *hate* the enemies of God. And we will never be able to hate God's enemies as long as we are under the influence of this lie that God is somehow ultimately responsible for everything that happens in the world, since He is sovereign over His creation! God wants us to learn how to fight and defeat His enemies, not sit around and *blame Him* for what His enemies are doing!

And speaking of God's enemies, what are we supposed to about the situation with King Obama? How are we supposed to react to our fellow Americans who elected this man? How will we deal with all the "change" he will bring to the nation? Well, if you want to hear what the spirit of Antichrist is telling us to do, all you have to do is go to The Elijah List and read the prophesies and the advise that's supposed to be coming to us through the prophets. For instance, the day after the election, this is what Steve Shultz, the owner of the Elijah List web site, had to say:

"I've never seen **less clarity** than during this season over who would be the next President. This, I believe, **was a tactic of God**. And I've always said God can change a man or a nation in a moment. I've also said God is not a Republican nor a Democrat. **He is in charge of the universe**. . .Earlier this morning, our editor Julie Smith and I were praying and talking about the election outcome. She shared with me that last night after Barack Obama was announced the winner, **God simply told her to "Pray for him like he is a son."** I believe this is the heart of God over our new President-elect; because **he is a son** and **we are to pray for him as one**. Please keep the current and the next President in your prayers. . .I truly believe that for most prophetic voices, God HID who would be the next President. And add to the fact that **we are the most righteous nation on the earth**, giving generously and praying fervently in this last season. We are a people that need to stand and **not allow the rift of this nation to get any wider** than what it already is."

And here's some prophetic wisdom from Chuck Pierce, one of today's well-known "prophets":

"We are called to pray for all of those in authority, not just for those that we preferred to win an election. We are a "peculiar people," not a political caucus. We are a people **who can steer the course of history with our prayers and acts of faith**. . . Jesus had to deal with the mind set of some of His key leadership that were more interested in making Him a king of a nation, than recognizing Him as King of the Kingdom of God. . . May **Holy Spirit go before President-elect Barack Obama** upon entering this new season. May **Holy Spirit be a rearguard behind him in every decision** made for righteousness' sake. May Holy Spirit continue to be enfolded into the history of this covenant land. May **Holy Spirit triumph as this nation goes through great change.**"

Now there's a good example of a "man-centered" gospel. Mr. Pierce says: "We are a people who can steer the course of history with our prayers and acts of faith". And then we have Mr. Shultz agreeing with his deluded secretary, that King Obama is a "son" of God, and that we should pray for him "as a son". Yes, the Holy Spirit will surly "go before" Obama and "be a rearguard behind him" because, after all, God "is in charge of the universe". Oh, and let's not forget how comforting it is to know that America is "the most righteous nation on the earth". Therefore, since God is in charge of the whole universe, and since America is the most righteous nation on earth, we can certainly presume and have confidence that the "Holy Spirit will triumph as this nation goes through great (Communist, God-hating, baby-murdering, fagot-exalting) change"! So, after hearing the Word of the Lord, do you feel the "warm fuzzies"?

I must be serving a different kind of "god" than these people because what I hear the Spirit saying is just the opposite. I hear God calling me to pray that He sends His judgment and wrath on this abomination. Of course I know that's not exactly the politically correct thing to be saying right now. But I feel like the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah:

*O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the LORD. For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, **because they are filled with eastern ways; they are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they are pleased with the children of foreigners.** Their land is also full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is also full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots. Their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. People bow down, and each man humbles himself; **therefore do not forgive them.***

Isaiah 2:5-8 NKJ

*Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." [Jeremiah prays] Give heed to me, O LORD, and listen to the voice of those who contend with me! **Shall evil be repaid for good?** For they have dug a pit for my life. Remember that I*

*stood before You to speak good for them, to turn away Your wrath from them. Therefore **deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; let their wives become widows and bereaved of their children. Let their men be put to death, their young men be slain by the sword in battle.** Let a cry be heard from their houses, when You bring a troop suddenly upon them; for they have dug a pit to take me, and hidden snares for my feet. Yet, LORD, You know all their counsel which is against me, to slay me. **Provide no atonement for their iniquity, nor blot out their sin from Your sight;** but let them be overthrown before You. Deal thus with them in the time of Your anger.*

Jeremiah 18:18-23 NKJ

Do you think Jeremiah was wrong for asking God to curse the nation and the leaders of Israel? Do you think he was wrong to ask God *not* to forgive them as Isaiah did? Was this just an outburst of Jeremiah's flesh and Isaiah's flesh? Or do you think it's possible the *Lord Himself* led them to pray that way? Do you think the Spirit of righteousness, and a perfect hatred for all the evil the people had committed, was rising up in those two men and it came out like it did in those kind of prayers?

Do you think it's possible the people of Israel and the leaders of Israel had rejected and mocked the mercy of God, and the call of God to repent for so long, the only thing left was judgement? And I'm not talking about the kind of judgement that's used to bring people back to a place of repentance. I'm talking about *wrath* which comes to utterly destroy them; to cut them off in their sin.

Do you think God would ever lead *you* to pray that kind of a prayer? Do you think God would ever lead *you* to pray for the destruction of America, or for God's wrath to fall upon America? Or do you think that's "Old" Testament thinking?

Well, next week, Lord willing, I'm going to discuss something called "Imprecatory Prayer". Imprecatory prayers are prayers of judgment. They are prayers that ask God to judge and curse His enemies, and the enemies of His people. The Psalms are full of these kinds of prayers, and we just saw two examples of them from Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Unfortunately, most of God's people don't know how to relate to imprecatory prayers because they seem to contradict everything that's taught in the New Testament. Indeed, if the average preacher or Bible teacher heard you praying one of these prayers he would tell you don't know what spirit you are of; just like James and John, who wanted to call fire down from heaven and consume the Samaritans. In fact, most of today's ministers just assume imprecatory prayers are part of the *sub-Christian culture* of the Old Testament. But I think you'll be surprised to learn the truth about them.